

A True Account of several Passages relating to the Execution of Sir John Johnston.

By William Smythies Curate of St. Giles's Cripple-gate.

I Had forbore this Publication, (notwithstanding many importunities) if a Printed Paper had not come abroad, which gave a very imperfect, and in some things, a very false Account concerning Sir John Johnston ; with which there was an aspersion that I was the Pen man of it. I have been likewise informed, That the Ministers who Visited him in the Prison, are accus'd, of being too credulous and easy to be impos'd upon. And I am sure, there is great Wrong done to an Apothecary in Newgate-Street. I have therefore resolv'd to a give very just Account of Matter of Fact, and no more.

On Thursday, the 10th. Instant, Sir John Johnston sent an importunate Request to Dr. W. beseeching him, tho' a stranger, to grant his Assistance to a dying Man ; to which, the Dr. readily complied : And after he had twice given him the Blessed Sacrament, and heard the most Solemn repeated Protestations of his Innocency ; desired Dr. F. to meet him the next day in the Prison, and to bring some other Ministers with him, which occasioned my Attendance. When we came to him, the Doctors adjur'd him by all that was Sacred and Terrible, (with such Expressions as might have made even an innocent man to tremble) to speak nothing but the Truth ; assuring him withal that there was very little hope of his obtaining favour, considering that many Great Men believed him Guilty of that for which he was Condemned, and many other enormous Crimes. He then gave us an Account concerning the taking away of the Young Heiress ; the Substance of which is contained in this following Letter, which he wrote with his own hand, a little after he had received the Sacrament the third or fourth time, and when he was going to his Execution.

S I R,

I Think it is not amiss, as a dying Man, to give you a short Account of all my Innocency, and all the Reason, I know, they have for bringing me to this untimely End. On Fryday Morning, being the Day she was taken away ; about Ten of the Clock, Captain Campbell and Mr. Montgomery came to my Lodging with a Hunch of Venison. I asked them what they were going to do with that ; Mr. Montgomery told me, it was to Treat Madam Biarly, and the rest of the Young Ladies ; and that he would have Captain Campbell Married to one of them this night,

and asked me if I would go and be a Witness to it. I told him, It must be by Consent, or else I would have nothing to do with it: He told me, That if he did not procure her Consent, he would not meddle with it, and so we parted, he desiring me to come and meet him, at six of the Clock, at a Coffee house near his Lodging; which I did, and met Capt. Campbell there; and some time afterwards, Mr. Montgomery came and call'd us to the door, and told us, The Business was done. About Eight of the Clock, Madam Biarly's Coach came by, and they went all away: Capt. Campbell called a Coach and six Horses, and bid us go in, and ordered the Coachman to drive after her Coach, and stop in Great Queen Street.

When she was put into the Coach, as I am a Dying Man and now Receiving the Sacrament, I could perceive no Discomposure in her at all; for after some Time spent [by Mr. Campbell] in his Amours. She began to talk of my Lord Argyle, and told us, That she had seen some of his Children at Ham, and that he was Married to the Dutchess of Lauderdale's Daughter, and asked him if he were the Second Brother. Upon some Discourse, which I do not well remember, she gave him her Hand that she would Marry him. This good Humour continued still with her; so that when the Parson desired her to say the Words after him, she spake with so audible a Voice, that the whole People in the Room distinctly heard her louder than the Minister. After the Ceremony was over, it was observed, Her Wedding-Ring was too big; her Husband told her he would have it changed to morrow: She said, No, it is not Lucky to change a Wedding-Ring. At Supper, there was nothing to be observed, but an equal Satisfaction betwixt both. When it was ask'd her, Whether she inclined to go to Bed, she freely Consented. Next Morning, when we came and asked them how they Rested, she in particular Answered me, very well. About Ten of the Clock Mr. Montgomery asked her, If she would go to Mr. Pontac's to Dinner; she said, With all her heart: Where we went, and stayed till Four in the Afternoon, and the House full of People. Then we went to our Lodgings, and played at Cards till half an Hour after Nine; then she went to Bed with all the seeming Pleasantness imaginable. This is the Truth, and no more, as I am a Dying Man; neither truly was it ever my Intention or Design to be a Witness of any thing that would look like a Force, neither indeed was there any Occasion for it, she being so very frank and Free, of her self, to the Marriage. I have forgot to tell you, That I desired her in the Coach not to be afraid of any thing; for I told her, there should be nothing of Force imposed upon her: She told me that she was not at all afraid of that. She wrote likewise to her Aunt freely, a Letter, desiring she might not be troubled for her, for she was very well with her Husband, Captain Campbell. As for her Husband desiring her to go before

before my Lord Mayor, I know nothing of that. I find in the Printed [Session] Paper, they do us a great deal of Injury, in saying, That she was forced to bed upon Promises, and several other things. Truly I never heard of any such thing till I read it in that Paper, neither do I believe it.

The Truth of what is contained in this Letter, he solemnly protested upon his frequent Receiving the Sacrament, and likewise at the time of the Execution. He told us, that he had not been concerned in the carrying away the Young Gentlewoman, if he had not understood by Mr. *Montgomery* that she was willing to be taken from her Aunt, and would make no Noise or Disturbance when it was done. He had a Paper containing the Substance of this Letter, ready at his Tryal, but was advised, for very obvious Reasons, not to make use of it.

That which follows, is a Letter to his Kinsman, occasion'd by an Information secretly given to him, that his Blood would be revenged upon his Prosecutors.

Dear Sir,

BEING now on my Last Preparation for Another World, I esteem myself obliged to Communicate to you my last Desires, with Relation to This. I thank God, I not only freely forgive all who have been Accessary to my Death, but desire by this my Final Request to my Friends, whom I shall leave behind, to forgive them all. And therefore must beg you in my Name, to Communicate this my Request to them, and to beg them, if they cannot wholly forget who have been my Enemies; yet at least, not to do the least Prejudice to any of them, on my Account. This I am very earnest with you in, and thereby you will much oblige,

Your Friend and Servant,

John Johnston.

One of the Doctors told him of a Report, That he had Three Months before, agreed with Mr. *Campbell* to steal the Young Gentlewoman, and that they were to cast Lots which should have her, and that he on whom the Lot fell, should give to the other Three Hundred Pounds. To this he solemnly protested, that there was not one Syllable of it true, and that he knew nothing concerning her, till the Morning of that day in which she was Married.

The same Dr. told him of a Report from *Chaster*, That there was a Rape Sworn against him. He confessed the Truth of it, and gave this following Account. His Souldiers had been so affronted by several of the Townsmen, that the Sentinels could not keep their Posts,

Posts, without danger of hurt done them, by Stones thrown from the tops of Houses, and that there was one Gun discharged, which had like to have killed one of them: That coming to the *Castle* late in the Evening, he saw a Man and a Woman standing in a place, which made him suspect some ill design against his Soldiers, whereupon he commanded one of his Officers to seize them, but the Man escaping the Woman only was committed to the *Serjeant*, till she should discover who the Man was, which she did, and the next Morning she was discharged: About a Fortnight after this, *Sir John* came to *London* to complain to the King, of some Indignities which had been done to him. In the mean time, the Woman swore a *Rage* against him; but her Conscience accusing her, and the *Serjeant*, with others, being able to Testify that *Sir John* came not at her; she confessed her wickedness to some Persons in the Town, and said, that her Brother threatened to kill her, if she did not do it, and desir'd that she might go into *Ireland* to avoid the consequence of his displeasure; *Sir John* being informed of this, and having taken her Confession before several Witnesses, gave her *Five Pounds* to bear her charges. He desired not to obtain any mercy from God or Man, if upon a Reprieve, till there could be a Return from *Chester*, he was not fully Vindicated from that Calumny: And in order to it, one of the Doctors promised to write to the Bishop of *Chester*, to intreat him, to examine the Truth of it from several Persons of Note in the Town.

He blessed God, that he had daily performed the Duties of Religion, but lamented, with very great Expressions of Grief, that his darling Sin returned upon him. I asked him, If he had not defrauded any; to which he replied, That he had nothing of that guilt in his Conscience; and took occasion to thank God, that tho' he had been often Engaged in Duels, yet he had never Kill'd his Combatant, it being his desire only to overcome, and not to destroy.

It was thought by some, that he prolonged his Speech and his Devotions at the place of Execution, in hope of a Reprieve. But I am far from thinking so, for before he came out of the Prison, he blessed God, that his mind was so well satisfied, and by the grace of God, he was so prepared to dye, that if a Reprieve should come, it would do him an injury rather than a kindness. And when he came to the place of Execution, one of his Friends told him, by the Coach-side, That he then came from the King, and no Reprieve could be obtained for him, at which he did not in the least, seem to be moved.

Some of his Country-men told me, That he was *Sir John Johnston of Cascaban*, the second Baronet in *Scotland*.